

STATISTICAL NOTE

INDUCED TERMINATIONS OF PREGNANCY (ABORTIONS) IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: 1998

**D.C. STATE CENTER OF HEALTH STATISTICS
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

July 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ivan C.A. Walks, M.D.
Director
Department of Health

Carl W. Wilson, M.P.H.
Director
State Center for Health Statistics

Prepared by:

Fern Johnson Clarke, Ph.D.
Health Statistician
Chief, Research and Analysis Division
State Center for Health Statistics

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Induced Terminations of Pregnancy (Abortions)	1
Summary	2
Definition (Abortion)	2
Appendix: Definitions of Induced Abortion Procedures	14
1998 Population Estimates by Age and Gender	15
1998 Population Estimates by Individual Age for Women 15 to 19 Years	16

List of Tables

Table 1. Induced Abortions: Total and D.C. Residents, 1979-1998	3
Table 2. Abortions by Residence and Quarter of Occurrence, 1998	4
Table 3. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Age, 1998	5
Table 4. Total D.C. Resident Abortions and Rates by Age, 1998	6
Table 5. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Race, 1998	7
Table 6. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Ethnicity, 1998	7
Table 7. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Marital Status, 1998	8
Table 8. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Number of Previous Abortions, 1998	8
Table 9. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Type of Patient, 1998	9
Table 10. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Primary Method, 1998	9
Table 11. Total D.C. Resident Abortions by Length of Gestation, 1998	10

List of Figures

Figure A. Induced Abortions: Total and D.C. Residents, 1979-1998	11
Figure B. 1998 Reported D.C. Resident Abortions by Age	12

INDUCED TERMINATIONS OF PREGNANCY (ABORTIONS) IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: 1998

There were 8,336 abortions performed in the District of Columbia (D.C.) and 23 D.C. resident abortions performed outside of D.C. in 1998. Therefore, a total of 8,359 abortions were reported to the Department of Health, 5.5 percent fewer than the 8,843 reported in 1997. Of the 8,336 reported abortions that occurred in D.C., there were 2,914 abortions reported for D.C. residents in 1998, 42.5 percent fewer than the 5,071 abortions reported in 1997. In 1998, a total of 2,937 D.C. resident abortions were performed, which included D.C. residents who had abortions performed outside of D.C. (Table 1 and Figure A).

Abortions in the District of Columbia are reported to the Department of Health on a voluntary basis by hospitals and free-standing clinics. Their reports are confidential and the Department of Health does not provide data on individual hospitals and clinics. Pregnancy termination reports were received from seven facilities including Virginia=s transcript exchange in 1998. (One of the eight facilities reporting in 1997 has closed and, therefore, did not submit reports in 1998.) The Department of Health does not receive reports on abortions performed in the offices of physicians and those abortions are not included in the 8,359 total.

Tables 2 through 11 show the frequency distributions of various items. Cross tabulations of these items are not possible with the current reporting system as data are reported in an aggregated form rather than on individual abortions. Some items of interest are:

- # Thirty-five percent of the women obtaining abortions in the District were residents of the District of Columbia (Table 1), 41.6 percent of the women were residents of Maryland, and 19.2 percent of the women were residents of Virginia (Table 2).**
- # Of the total reported D.C. resident abortions in 1998, 21.2 percent were to women 15-19 years of age, 22.3 percent were to women under 20 years of age and 53.7 percent were to women under age 25. Women 20-24 years old had the highest number of abortions (Table 3 and Figure B).**
- # The abortion rate in 1998 was 23.2 per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years. Abortion rates were highest for women aged 18-19 years (51 abortions per 1,000 women) and for women aged 20-24 years (42 abortions per 1,000 women) and lowest for women at the extremes of reproductive-age (i.e., about two abortions per 1,000 women under 15 years and one abortion per 1,000 women aged 40 years and older) (Table 4).**

- # **Eighty-four percent of the total reported D.C. residents obtaining abortions in and outside of the District were Black, 5.5 percent were White, and 10.5 percent were other races (Table 5). Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.**
- # **Nine percent of the total D.C. residents obtaining an abortion were Hispanic (Table 6).**
- # **Eighty-eight percent of the total D.C. residents obtaining an abortion had never been married and only 6.6 percent were currently married (Table 7).**
- # **In D.C., 33.5 percent of the residents obtaining abortions in 1998 reported that they had not had a prior abortion, while 33.6 percent reported having one previous abortion, 16.8 percent reported having two previous abortions, and 16.1 percent reported having three or more previous abortions (Table 8).**
- # **Almost all of the D.C. residents obtaining an abortion (99.3 percent) were outpatients (Table 9). Suction curettage was the primary type of procedure used in 88.7 percent of the cases (Tables 10).**
- # **Almost eighty-nine percent of the D.C. resident abortions were under 13 weeks gestation (Table 11).**

Summary

D.C. residents obtaining abortions in and outside of the District of Columbia in 1998 were predominantly young (under 25 years of age), had never been married, and 66.5 percent reported having had one or more previous abortions. These are the groups most in need of programs for the prevention of unplanned pregnancies.

Definition

Abortion (Induced termination of pregnancy) is the purposeful interruption of pregnancy with the intention other than to produce a live-born infant or to remove a dead fetus.

TABLE 1. INDUCED ABORTIONS: TOTAL AND D.C. RESIDENTS, 1979-1998				
ABORTIONS				
YEAR	TOTAL REPORTED ABORTIONS¹ D.C. OCCURRENCES	REPORTED OUT- OF-STATE ABORTIONS TO D.C. RESIDENTS²	REPORTED OCCURRENCES D.C. RESIDENTS³	TOTAL D.C. RESIDENTS⁴
1998	8,336	23	2,914	2,937
1997	8,771	72	5,071	5,143
1996	13,617	57	6,771	6,853
1995	14,131	182	6,422	6,604
1994	16,437	151	7,761	7,912
1993	17,485	143	7,865	8,008
1992	17,698	140	8,151	8,291
1991	18,899	174	9,181	9,355
1990	19,969	197	9,208	9,405
1989	19,535	231	9,084	9,315
1988	20,822	393	9,931	10,324
1987	20,879	608	9,836	10,444
1986	19,942	511	9,517	10,028
1985	19,541	875	8,627	9,502
1984	23,132	207	11,266	11,473
1983	22,867	52	11,775	11,827
1982	24,207	62	12,350	12,412
1981	25,952	118	13,014	13,132
1980	27,183	70	13,809	13,879
1979	28,694	149	13,611	13,760

¹Abortions performed in the District of Columbia and reported to the Department of Health. Total includes D.C. residents as well as non-D.C. residents.

²Out-of-state abortions performed on D.C. residents reported to the Department of Health.

³Reported abortions performed in the District of Columbia on D.C. residents.
Includes only reported D.C. residents.

⁴Abortions performed on reported District of Columbia residents, regardless of state abortions were performed.

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 2. ABORTIONS BY RESIDENCE AND QUARTER OF OCCURRENCE, 1998						
QUARTER	TOTAL*	5277	MD	VA	OTHER STATES	UNKNOWN STATES
TOTAL	8,359	2,937	3,468	1,601	137	216
FIRST	2,324	841	953	434	39	57
SECOND	2,147	795	856	448	16	32
THIRD	2,000	704	805	444	15	32
FOURTH	1,888	597	854	275	67	95

*Abortions performed on reported District of Columbia residents, regardless of state abortions were performed.

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 3. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY AGE, 1998		
AGE (IN YEARS)	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,218*	100.1**
UNDER 15	24	1.1
15	35	1.6
16	61	2.8
17	81	3.7
18	133	6.0
19	161	7.3
15 - 19	471	21.2
20 - 24	697	31.4
25 - 29	551	24.8
30 - 34	306	13.8
35 - 39	142	6.4
40 AND OVER	27	1.2

*Does not include 719 abortions with unreported age.

**Does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: State Center for health Statistics, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 4. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS AND RATES BY AGE, 1998		
AGE (IN YEARS)	NUMBER	RATE
TOTAL	2,937	23.2*
UNDER 15¹	24	1.9
15 - 19	471	36.0
15	35	15.3
16	61	26.8
17	81	30.2
15 - 17	177	24.4
18	133	48.1
19	161	52.8
18 - 19	294	50.6
20 - 24	697	42.3
25 - 29	551	20.4
30 - 34	306	12.5
35 - 39	142	6.1
40 AND OVER²	27	1.2
NOT REPORTED	719	-

*Rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years.

¹Computed by relating the number of events to women under 15 years of age to women aged 10-14 years.

²Computed by relating the number of events to women aged 40 years and over to women aged 40-44 years.

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 5. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY RACE*, 1998		
RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,217*	100.0
BLACK	1,863	84.0
WHITE	121	5.5
OTHER	233	10.5

***Including persons of Hispanic origin.**

****Does not include 720 abortions with unreported race.**

TABLE 6. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY ETHNICITY, 1998		
ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,150*	100.0
HISPANIC	189	8.8
NOT HISPANIC	1,961	91.2

***Does not include 787 abortions with unreported ethnicity.**

Note: Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 7. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY MARITAL STATUS, 1998		
MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,140*	100.0
CURRENTLY MARRIED	142	6.6
SEPARATED	61	2.9
NEVER MARRIED	1,881	87.9
DIVORCED	53	2.5
WIDOWED	3	0.1

***Does not include 797 abortions with unreported marital status.**

TABLE 8. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY NUMBER OF PREVIOUS ABORTIONS, 1998		
PREVIOUS ABORTIONS	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,142*	100.0
NONE	718	33.5
ONE	719	33.6
TWO	360	16.8
THREE OR MORE	345	16.1

***Does not include 795 abortions with unreported number of previous abortions.**

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 9. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY TYPE OF PATIENT, 1998		
TYPE OF PATIENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,196*	99.9**
INPATIENT	14	0.6
OUTPATIENT	2,182	99.3

*Does not include 706 abortions with unreported type of patient.

**Does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 10. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY PRIMARY METHOD, 1998		
PRIMARY METHOD	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,151*	100.0
SUCTION CURETTAGE	1,907	88.7
MEDICAL (Nonsurgical), specify medications	0	0.0
DILATION AND EVACUATION (D & E)	240	11.2
INTRA-UTERINE INSTILLATION (Saline or Prostaglandin)	3	0.1
SHARP CURETTAGE (D & C)	1	0.05
HYSTEROTOMY/HYSTERECTOMY	0	0.0
OTHER METHODS (Specify)	0	0.0

*Does not include 786 abortions with unreported primary method.

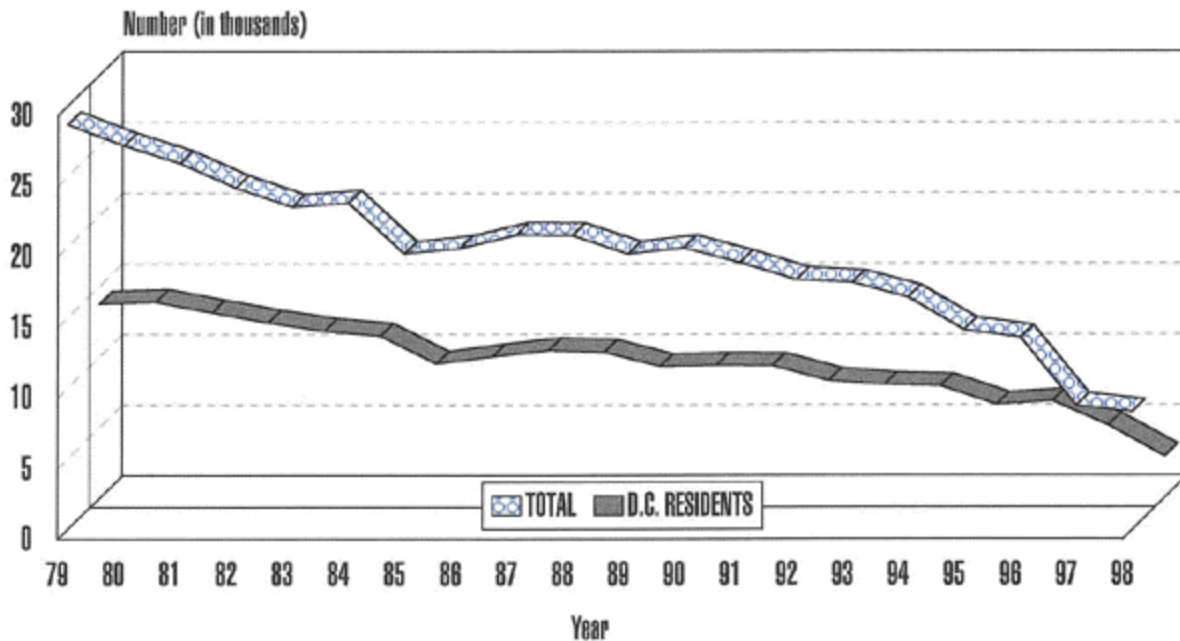
Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

TABLE 11. TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY LENGTH OF GESTATION, 1998		
GESTATION (IN WEEKS)	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL	2,137*	100.0
UNDER 6	4	0.2
6 - 12	1,895	88.7
13 - 15	190	8.9
16 - 20	48	2.2
21 OR MORE	0	0.0

***Does not include 800 abortions with unreported length of gestation.**

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

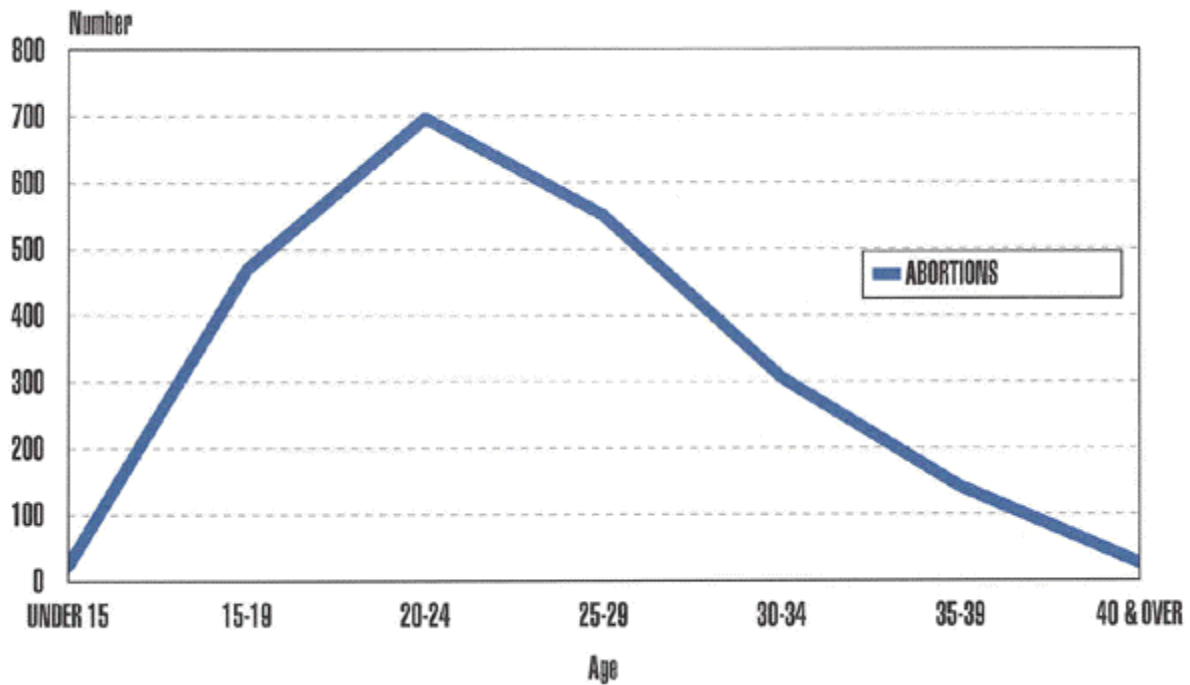
**FIGURE A. INDUCED ABORTIONS:
TOTAL AND D.C. RESIDENTS, 1979-1998**



NOTE: D.C. RESIDENTS INCLUDE ABORTIONS PERFORMED ON REPORTED DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RESIDENTS, REGARDLESS OF STATE ABORTIONS WERE PERFORMED.

Source: State Center of Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

FIGURE B. 1998 TOTAL D.C. RESIDENT ABORTIONS BY AGE



NOTE: 719 ABORTIONS WITH UNREPORTED AGE ARE NOT INCLUDED.

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, Government of the District of Columbia.

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS OF INDUCED ABORTION PROCEDURES

Suction Curettage (Also known as vacuum aspiration)-- In this procedure the cervical canal is dilated by the successive insertion of instruments of increasing diameter called dilators. When the opening is large enough, a flexible tube (cannula) is inserted into the uterine cavity, and the fetal and placental tissues are then suctioned out by an electric vacuum pump.

Medical (Nonsurgical)-- This nonsurgical procedure involves the administration of a medication or medications to induce an abortion. Medications (e.g. methotrexate, mifepristone, misoprostol, etc.) are used most frequently early in the first trimester of pregnancy. However, some medications (e.g. prostaglandin suppositories, injectable prostaglandins, etc.) may also be administered during the second trimester of pregnancy to induce abortion. Medications may be administered orally, by injection, or intra-vaginally.

Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)-- This procedure, used most frequently in the second trimester, involves opening the cervix (dilation) and using primarily sharp techniques, but also suction and other instrumentation such as forceps for evacuation.

Intra-Uterine Instillation-- This procedure involves either withdrawing a portion of amniotic fluid from the uterine cavity by a needle inserted through the abdominal wall and replacing this fluid with a concentrated salt solution (known as saline instillation, saline abortion, or saline amniotic fluid exchange) or injecting a prostaglandin--a substance with hormonelike activity--into the uterine cavity through a needle inserted through the abdominal wall (known as intra-uterine prostaglandin instillation). The saline instillation process induces labor, which results in the expulsion of the usually dead fetus approximately 24 to 48 hours later. The interval between prostaglandin injection and expulsion tends to be shorter than in a saline abortion.

Sharp Curettage (Also known as dilation and curettage, D&C, or surgical curettage)-- This procedure involves the dilation of the cervix as in suction, although usually to a larger diameter. The fetal and placental tissues are then scraped out with a curette, which resembles a small spoon.

Hysterotomy/Hysterectomy-- Hysterotomy involves surgical entry into the uterus, as in cesarean section, that removes a fetus that is too small to survive even with extraordinary life support measures. Hysterotomy is usually performed only if other abortion procedures fail. Hysterectomy is a procedure in which the uterus is removed either with the fetus inside or after the fetus has been removed. It is usually performed only when a pathological condition of the uterus, such as fibroid tumors, warrants its removal or when a woman desires sterilization.

1998 Population Estimates by Age and Gender			
Age in Years	Total	Female	Male
Total all ages	523,124	278,077	245,047
Under 5	30,528	15,082	15,446
5-9	33,415	16,408	17,007
Total 10-44 years	269,849	138,857	130,992
10-14	25,014	12,430	12,584
15-19	25,774	13,069	12,705
20-24	31,537	16,472	15,065
25-29	51,595	26,946	24,649
30-34	47,935	24,572	23,363
35-39	45,836	23,288	22,548
40-44	42,158	22,080	20,078
Total 15-44 years	244,835	126,427	118,408
45-49	37,542	19,959	17,583
50-54	31,776	16,754	15,022
55-59	26,087	14,043	12,044
60-64	21,218	11,785	9,433
65-69	20,282	11,556	8,726
70-74	18,380	11,137	7,243
75-79	15,261	9,459	5,802
80-84	9,751	6,524	3,227
85 and over	9,035	6,513	2,522

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

1998 Population Estimates by Individual Age for Women Aged 15 to 19 Years Obtained by Applying 1997 Female Population Proportion to 1998 Estimated Female Population Aged 15-19 Years		
Age of Women (in years)	1998	1997
Total 15-19*	13,069	13,004
15	2,295	2,283
16	2,278	2,267
17	2,681	2,668
18	2,763	2,749
19	3,052	3,037

***2.5 percent of total estimated population in 1997 and 1998.**